

**Save Our Bosque Task Force
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 3, 2017**

Attendees: Nick Smokovich, Matt Mitchell, Fred Hollis, Gina Dello Russo, Doug Boykin, Connie Robnett, Carlos Vega, Jon Erz, Mark Mercer, Bob Markwell, Chris Sichler, Cyndie Lawrence, Dave Dever, Darrel Reasner, Dagmar Llewellyn, Anne Marken, Kathy Albrecht, Yasmeen Najmi (via telephone)

9:32 a.m. Save Our Bosque Task Force meeting convened.

1. Approve Agenda *Motion by Matt to approve, second by Gina; approved.*
2. Approve Minutes from meeting of December 6, 2016. *Motion by Fred to approve, second by Connie; approved.*

3. Treasurer's Report

- a. A current accounting was not available at the January meeting. Nyleen Troxel Stowe will prepare a 2017 spreadsheet before the February meeting. The Task Force received a donation \$500 from Doris Rhodes, toward the Restore Our Rivers Initiative goal.
- b. Bills: It was agreed to advance to Gina the costs of her registration and lodging at the Tamarisk Coalition conference in Colorado.

Other: Gina asked Nyleen to add a column for Restore Our Rivers activity to the Task Force accounting spreadsheet.

4. Project Updates

- a. Wildland Urban Interface Mitigation Project from Fred: The county manager has sent the project manager contract to the Department of Homeland Security in Santa Fe. A request of extension has been filed and work is to begin in the fall. Before work begins, an environmental assessment must be filed, and this will require another contract.
- b. Partners for Fish & Wildlife Projects and Partnership report. Gina said the Perry project will be completed with a second planting in February. Lawrence-Dever is under way with rock terracing. Work has begun on the Taliaferro project, with clearing of old salt cedar, drain rehab, and planned pipe crossings and limited gates for irrigation. She sent Angel Montoya a status request for the Armendaris contract. Jon Erz inquired how many holes would be required for planting and indicated that he and/or Kathy might be available to drill some holes; SWCD needs to be consulted to find out whether they would lend their equipment. Doug reported that he had requested FWS to release the remaining \$40K for work. Gina and Nicole Gordon are working together on the Thomas-Brook project plan and will continue to do in the next round.
- c. Riverine Parks/SNA: Doug went through the parks with the contractor in December, and reports that reopening is anticipated for February. Major construction will be finished and ramps in place. Gina indicated we will need to discuss access control with the Conservancy and that we will need gates and large rocks. Chris Sichler said the Army Corps of Engineers will put in a road where the bridge was removed at Confluence Park, and indicated he thought a cement slab

would suffice. Gina pointed out that the road is back access between Escondida and Socorro. Yasmeen would like to make time in March to install the necessary gates.

- d. Rio Grande Trail, Socorro Valley Trail efforts: Action on the Rio Grande Trail may be in the offing; Ken McQueen, the new Secretary of Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources, emailed recently that the governor has a continuing interest in the success of the Rio Grande Trail.
 - e. Sevilleta NWR projects: Jon reported that they are still looking at design options for the Unit B gates. The contract specifies \$30K, and he hopes that contract will be in place in Q1 2017. He is unsure how final grading work will be done and indicated that Sevilleta may have to rent equipment. They plan to harvest and plant 2,000-3,000 trees in 2017. He reported that the cost of the project with ACE crews added made it more expensive to get the trees and so the decision was made not to use ACE crews. They hope to harvest in the easier access area along the ditch. Pending approval and permitting, the harvesting may be scheduled for late January. He added that they want to plant 10,000 over three years. Gina and Doug will prepare a contract for Darrel Reasner. Jon requested funds of \$50/day (for a total of \$300) to provide snacks and drinks for tree planting volunteers. Fred moved to approve the expense; Connie seconded; motion carried. Jon will provide planting dates.
5. The regular meeting broke to hear a presentation by Anne Marken and Dagmar Llewellyn on the proposed Middle Rio Grande Basin Study. At the conclusion of the presentation, Fred moved to submit a commitment letter for support of and participation in the Study. Yasmeen seconded, and the motion carried.
- 4f. Bureau of Reclaims Escondida Fire Habitat Restoration: Carlos Vega, Angel Montoya and Nicole Gordon plan to meet with affected landowners regarding habitat restoration opportunities. It was agreed that Escondida Lake Park would be a good place for a meeting. Gina mentioned that the county may have some available funds for work in this area.
- g. Central Socorro Bosque Severance Project: A work plan by MRGCD and State Forestry has been drafted and is with the Conservancy for approval. Doug toured the area with the Army Corps of Engineers before Christmas and reports that the Corps is enthusiastic about working on the project. Development of a treatment plan is under way, along with work on cultural resources clearances.
 - h. Other: nothing to add.
6. Restore our Rivers Initiative There will be a meeting for strategic and fundraising planning tomorrow afternoon at 1:30.
 7. Tamarisk Leaf Beetle Public Meeting Planning There is a planning meeting this afternoon, Jan. 3, to plan for the public meeting on February 1.
 8. Perspectives Overview of Biological Opinion The Biological Opinion (BO) is available on the FWS website, at https://www.fws.gov/southwest/ES/NewMexico/documents/BO/2016-F-0287_BO_five_NMISC_Habitat_Restoration_Sites_in_San_Acacia_Reach_of_MRG.pdf
Gina made brief comments on the BO, mentioning among other things that it discusses taking offsets and outlines actions they want agencies to take. The BO focuses on the effects of proposed

actions and on reasonable and prudent measures to minimize take of threatened and endangered species. Gina noted that the period from April 15 through September 1 is a shutdown time for breeding. A plan for the lower reach will look at habitat restoration opportunities, beginning in 2017. She said the BO contains conservation recommendations for monitoring flow, mitigating water loss, and development of a plan for wildfire restoration. Gina and Chris Sichler discussed some details of implementation of the recommendations, including opportunities for private holdings with conservation easements to be included habitat for flycatchers and cuckoos.

9. Other Agenda Items Chris Hill's work continues on the an updated Memorandum of Understanding and reported that is moving forward.
10. Facebook and Website updates Connie is to send Jon some pictures from our Fall 2016 tour of the levee, showing big fallen cottonwood tree and large equipment. Connie is also to begin developing a SOBTF document repository on Google Drive.
11. Calendar
 - 1/3 Planning for the Tamarisk Leaf Beetle public meeting on Feb. 1
 - 1/4 Fundraising and strategy meeting for Restore Our Rivers Initiative
 - 1/11 Rio Grande Trail Commission will meet in Santa Fe
 - 2/7-9 Tamarisk Coalition Annual Conference in Ft. Collins, Colorado
 - 2/10 and 2/18 Tree planting at Sevilleta NWF; Sevilleta is looking for volunteers
 - 2/23 & 24 Xeriscape Council meeting in Albuquerque; Gina will be presenting
12. Individual reports None
13. Adjourn about 11:45 a.m. *Motion by Connie, second by Matt; meeting adjourned.*